

## FAIR MARGARET.

Nature had no roses unseen yet:  
    Flowers all  
        We can recall,  
    Of garden trim or rivulet;  
How you envied them, regret!  
Even at the time when dewdrops make  
    Them sweetest, fresher, for your sake  
        With headless eye  
        We'd pass all by  
And all their lovelinesses forgot,  
    Which vanity by your side were set,  
        Fair Margaret.

## A FOG ROMANCE.

It was mid-morning in London town. It might have been nightfall in the City of the Clouds for all outward evidence to the contrary. Masses of dingy vapor rolled up against the window-panes, stirred now and then by a sooty little breeze, from nowhere in particular, that dispersed them not, only made a little black eddy and departed.

Indoors it felt at once hot, clammy, choking and smoky. The room was airy and spacious; one of the best private sitting-rooms Langham had to offer; yet Imogen Rag had just declared, "It felt like a chimney on fire being put out with wet blankets!" She was leaning against the window-frame as she spoke, gazing into the grimy sea of vapor, half-interested, half-alstrated.

She was very beautiful, even by that hideous light; with the singular beauty only found on the farther shores of the Atlantic; delicate, fragile and marvelously brilliant. ("The beauty of snowpeaks as sunrise; of an opal, with its heart of fire under its veil of snow," to quote the successful beginning of a poetical adorer, who gave up after a few more attempts to reduce the ineffable to a pen-and-ink summary.) She looked like a poem; like an artist's dream; and was a matter-of-fact, alert, self-reliant-like young damsel, practical and self-reliant-as because a citizen of "Airth's greatest nation."

Her companion was busily finishing his breakfast. He might have been a student of the Church by his dress. His stalwart build, and a general sense of his own life that pervaded him, seemed to indicate a sailor or a colonist, but the noble, intellectual head, with its mane of snowy hair, the massive features with their curious expression, the broad forehead, the prominent nose, but the original of the face that sparkled in the *Graphic* and scowled in the *Illustrated* on the side-table, and had been for the past week decorating the photographers' windows in every mixed company; the face of the temperance men of London literary and artistic, the philosopher and critic, Everard Holt, whom the literary world abroad had for the past week been delighted to honor.

The man had been busily finishing his breakfast.

"I have your wish at last, Imogen," he said; "this is quite a London particular," according to Gussy.

I felt we should lose something if we left without a fog—but I've got rather a thicker one than I expected here."

She didn't talk Yankee, out of mere respect to her taste; but she did speak distinctly enough that the word of an insolent Britisher, and her voice had the music of silver on silver. Speaking, she glanced out into the dinginess and in at a square envelope which she held daintily and respectfully. It was fastened with a ribbon, bearing the name of a man and a woman, at which she glanced with admiration unworthy her race.

This is a gloomy ending to our holiday, dear," and Everard looked toward her anxiously. Ward her, not at her, thereby betraying yourself; he was blind—totally, hopelessly blind—from some accident late in his life at the very zenith of his popularity and usefulness.

He had accepted the calamity characteristically, tried patiently and truly every possible means of recovery; then, less failing in his efforts, went to work to turn to some fresh branch of study, he had applied himself to the mastery of every art and device by which the lost sense might be supplied. He had a marvelous memory and a curiously sensitive nervous system, and he had a host of aims and a concert at which she glanced with admiration unworthy her race.

He is a good man, and I make something of him."

"Such a happy time followed. Seven long years ago, my de—. Seven long years!"

They gladly followed him as he retraced his way through the solid, quiet, richly-furnished rooms and the bright and centre of the house's comfort and luxury. A long, low room lighted by a silver lamp at the far end, near which on a couch lay a girlish figure.

"I wonder what you are thinking of?" said Miss Langton, with a queer little smile. "You must hear me out now."

"We are in great difficulties, and all through my foolishness. Will you help us?"

"With pleasure. I hear you want a guide, and a messenger, you shall have one directly. Was it not said I was justly speculating what I should do if I were out of the fog when you ring came?"

The bright eyes had left Imogen and wandered off to Everard, who now moved within the circle of the lamplight. "I—excuse me, she said suddenly, "but may I not know your name?"

Everard Holt.

"I knew it," she said triumphantly, producing a large photograph from an envelope. "My uncle brought me home this last night. He was at Weymouth."

"We're the Colonels Pyers-Lloyd, who returned thanks for the Army?"

"Now how could you possibly tell that? We are not at all alike."

"I cannot judge of your faces, but your voices are very much alike."

"She clapped her hands in a gleeful, girlish fashion. "Delightful! You recognized the Welsh accent. How pleased he will be! Don't you know he was there as representative of Cymru poetry, and has more titles than you would care to hear as a boy?"

"I know his translations well, and will read his monograph on Cymru versification."

"You must stay and see him. I will go to him, and force me if I let you go. You'll stay. I will order the carriage as soon after as you please."

"I know him well enough to trust him, and he is a good man."

"Fogs after all have their limits," said Everard.

"It is true. I believe, to go right through and find light and free air beyond. Should you like to try it?"

"So am, but stop—it put up your things first and start with a clear conscience."

"You are too late for once, oh! most scrupulous of maid-servants. Did it myself in a fit of indecision and consulted the chambermaid on the result. She says I have left nothing out and made a beautiful job of it."

"Indeed, are you tired of me?" with a pained ring of reproof in his voice.

"I am very glad to have been here and seen England and English people for myself; but my heart of hearts is and always will be American. Oh, it's good to think that in a fortnight more we shall be under the sun again!"

Imogen had spent a year wandering happily about Europe, together, sight-seeing, making friends, collecting materials for a new work and a course of lectures, and finding themselves welcome and honored everywhere. She never had the time of her life.

"Nothing can spoil our holiday, or our homecoming," she added quickly. "From first to last all has been pleasantness."

"And you don't regret the old country in your heart of hearts?"

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"Not till five," Imogen replied rather drowsily, "and I've packed my last scarf and a long, long worth of the papers, and there's nothing to do but sit and long for some fresh air after all last night's tempest and eloquence till the fog rises. Eugh! how it seems to close one and another one!"

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